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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
21 November 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Preliminary Analysis of Sadat's 20 November Speech

1. President Sadat's speech yesterday capped the increasingly heavy rhetoric that has been coming out of Cairo in recent weeks. It appears to be the airing of the "decision" referred to in a speech made last summer. At that time, Sadat said he would be forced to act before the end of 1971. With the chances for peace so slight, Sadat says he must now opt toward preparing for the battle.

2. The choice was a relatively easy one for him and the one he has almost certainly realized he would have to make. The big decision--on the timing and extent of the battle--has not been made and will be the toughest one to implement. The real crunch--"the order to cross" in his words--is still to come, and needs to be prepared for by "strenuous and fierce" training.

3. The Egyptians clearly are fiercely preparing for that final day. They are better prepared now for almost any sort of engagement with the Israelis than they were in 1967. We believe, however, that they cannot confront the Israelis with force sufficient to push them out of the Sinai, or even to hold a piece of the east bank of the Suez Canal for any longer than a few hours. The Egyptians could attack out of sheer frustration, however. Beyond this they might decide to engage in one of a number operations to harass the Israelis and perhaps to bring major pressure from the big powers on the Israelis to come to terms.

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4. In any of these possible actions, timing is critical and may be difficult to forecast. From Sadat's speech, any major operation seems unlikely to occur for some time and there have been no indications that Egyptian forces have been readying for imminent action. The smaller operations could come at any time, however, and are almost certain to come without warning. Egyptian commando forces have engaged in extensive training for some time.

5. With the debate on the Middle East question expected to begin around the end of November in the UN General Assembly, additional forceful speeches and war talk seem certain to come out of the Arab states. Sadat's speech in some part may be related to the UN discussion and other possible diplomatic moves on the part of the Arabs in the coming weeks. According to the Lebanese foreign minister, he and his Saudi counterpart were the only voices of moderation at the Arab Foreign Ministers conference last week.

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